

Fort Vancouver National Historic Site

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



McLoughlin House

National Park Service Becomes Steward of the McLoughlin House

The McLoughlin House, restored to honor the life and accomplishments of Dr. John McLoughlin, “the Father of Oregon,” has recently been turned over for administration by the National Park Service (NPS) from the McLoughlin Memorial Association (Association), who have been stewards of the house since 1909. The McLoughlin House will be managed by the Superintendent and staff of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site. Fort Vancouver has direct ties to Dr. McLoughlin since he was the Chief Factor at the Fort and headed the Hudson Bay Company’s vast Northwest operations.

On February 19, 1941, the John McLoughlin and Barclay houses in Oregon City, Oregon became a national historic site administered by the McLoughlin Memorial Association under a cooperative agreement with the Secretary of the Interior. On May 15, 2001, the citizens of Oregon City, Oregon, voted to transfer the McLoughlin House National Historic Site from the city to the NPS via an easement donation if authorized by Congress. On July 29, 2003, President Bush signed Public Law 108-63 (known as H.R. 733), which authorized the Secretary of the Interior to acquire the McLoughlin House National Historic Site in Oregon City,

Oregon, for inclusion as a unit of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site. Under the terms of agreement, the McLoughlin Memorial Association will sell the McLoughlin and Barclay houses to the NPS to allow for direct NPS management and maintenance of the structures.

The National Park Service is currently in the process of amending the 2003 *Fort Vancouver National Historic Site General Management Plan* (GMP). Since much of the plan was produced after the McLoughlin House legislation was signed into law, the NPS, in cooperation with the McLoughlin Memorial Association, Oregon City officials, and others, will amend the GMP to provide guidance to park management regarding the long-term protection and public use of the site.

In March of this year, staff members from the NPS’s Pacific West and Intermountain regions, Fort Vancouver NHS staff, and members of the McLoughlin Memorial Association conducted a two-day workshop in Oregon City to begin development of a management plan for the McLoughlin House. Workshop participants toured the McLoughlin and Barclay Houses, as well as the surrounding historic neighborhood to develop an understanding of the houses

and their natural and cultural setting. They also began developing a list of management issues to consider for the future management, operation, and maintenance of the site. These included, but were not limited to, the identification of potential partnerships between the NPS and various organizations associated with the McLoughlin House, and defining the appropriate levels of rehabilitation and adaptive reuse for the McLoughlin and Barclay Houses. Also identified was the need to develop an interpretive program, determine appropriate management practices and levels of operations and visitor services, articulate physical site needs, and ways to ensure the protection and enhancement of the historic and cultural resources of the site.

Public participation is important to this planning process. The public will be kept informed of opportunities for participation as the NPS further develops the GMP amendment for the McLoughlin House site. Additionally, after a preferred alternative has been selected, the NPS will present the plan to the public for comment. Newsletters will be sent out with specific details on public meeting dates, times, and location.



McLaughlin Memorial Association members tour the site with NPS Staff. (NPS Photo)



The gravesites of Dr. and Mrs. McLaughlin are one of the many cultural resources associated with the McLaughlin House. (NPS Photo)



The fountain in McLaughlin Park was donated by the Oregon City Womens Club in 1911. Recently, they generously donated funds to make improvements to the fountain. (NPS Photo)

Superintendent's Message

Dear Park Friends and Supporters,

Late last summer, a momentous occasion occurred for all of us when Congress passed legislation to expand the boundaries of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site to include the McLoughlin House National Historic Site. This grassroots effort to transfer the site to the National Park Service was led by the McLoughlin Memorial Association, who worked tirelessly at the helm along with Oregon City representatives, local organizations, and members of the public. The National Park Service is honored to have the opportunity to manage this national treasure as part of the National Park System and to continue to work with the Association. Since the passage of the legislation, National Park Service staff, working hand-in-glove with the Association, have begun the steady, thoughtful process of taking on the responsibility of managing and protecting and preserving the Site.

I'd like to share with you some of the initiatives and projects the National Park Service has recently taken on:

- We're working with Association staff to identify and implement ways to provide personal and non-personal interpretive services. We're also initiating an oral history program in which we will be able to document the wealth of information that Association members possess. We are beginning our efforts with a series of interviews of George (Wilmer) Gardner, who is a treasure in his own right!
- We have already applied for and received emergency funding for: hazard tree evaluation, pruning recommendations with contracted pruning to be accomplished utilizing Class "A" Arborist Standards; testing and evaluation of the automatic sprinkler system in the McLoughlin House; evaluation and component replacement of both the fire and security alarm systems at both houses; evaluation and replacement of the gutter system and the water/dry rot damage at the McLoughlin House; and evaluation and replacement of code deficient electrical wiring and electrical service panels.
- On a weekly basis, park maintenance staff are mowing the lawn, trimming landscaped vegetation, as well as cleaning and weeding the flowerbeds. The Site's sidewalks, porches, and paths have been evaluated and recommendations made to improve access for persons with disabilities. The walks have been pressure-washed to eliminate slipping hazards. Finally, a written/photo sign inventory of the site has been completed.
- A historic structures report was developed for the McLoughlin House and we are in the process of binding that document so that copies will be made available to the park's library and research needs and also to local partners' libraries. The paint analysis report for the exterior of the McLoughlin House has also been finalized and that report is in the process of being bound.
- Park Cultural Resource staff have assisted in a number of repairs, including repairing the exhibit case holding the Chilkat blanket, a curtain rod in one of the bedrooms, and an exhibit case in the first floor hallway.

We in the National Park Service look forward to working with the Association and others in our new responsibilities at the McLoughlin House Unit. We take our stewardship responsibilities very seriously and are committed in our mission to manage, protect, and preserve this very special place—not just for today or tomorrow but forever so that future generations will be able to experience, enjoy, and learn from this nationally significant site.

Tracy R. Fortmann

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Superintendent